

Morristown Conservation Commission
April 19, 2014

Attendees: Steve Rae, Dick Sargent, Brent Teillon, Jim Pease, Ron Stancliff
Guests: Lucien Gravel, Fran Sladyk, Sue Lovering, Dave Adams, Cynthia Hamblin-Perry

Meeting opened at 6:30 pm
February and March meeting minutes were approved

Guest Speaker – Dave Adams, Habitat Biologist Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department
Dave gave a presentation on habitat improvement such as apple tree release, patch cuts, stream bank stabilization, invasive species management and pioneer vs mature habitat species.

Discussion topics:

(1) What wildlife targets does MCC have for the Town Forest?

Deer, grouse, wood ducks, increase plant species diversity (chestnut trees?). Increasing tree species for food and cover such as beech, oak, butternut, hickory, cherry and apple. Beech trees in the Town Forest should be thinned/released on the N-E & W sides but not the south side to prevent sun scald and frost cracks that will damage the trees.

(2) How do we attract song birds? Increase habitat and habitat structure or forest canopy stories. Thinning can maintain diversity. Area #1 should be thinned by single tree selection and managed for a mature forest. Areas #3-4 are successional areas can be managed as such for hermit thrush and woodcock. 4 snags/acre should be left for woodpeckers. Large downed trees are necessary for grouse drumming habitat. Brush piles of tree tops are a good idea. Vermont Audubon is a resource; they will do bird assessments. You do need to be careful that active logging does not interfere with bird nesting times. Winter is the best time for logging. The group thought completing a field walk of Area #1 (30-40 acres) before further timber marking should occur in order to look at habitat improvement. Possibly late July-early August.

Future research - Jim will try and get a copy of the Forest Management Plan for MMSF to see what strategies are implemented on the adjacent state lands. Fran should be able to get the Rooney Farm and Christie forest management plans.

Green-Up Day

General discussion of logistics and assignments.

Historic Town Forest Walk

Ron would like to do a walk on April 26 or 27.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm

Respectively submitted,
Jim Pease
Secretary